



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

April 12, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director  
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-91 –  
FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government Department of Health  
and Human Services (DHHS) COVID-19 Emergency Response

- I. **FINDING:** As with previous funding requests regarding similar COVID-19 appropriations, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-91 – *FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) COVID-19 Emergency Response* – advances racial equity and social justice in the County by taking into consideration racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 vaccine distribution particularly as it relates to boosters. In supplemental information accompanying the funding request, DHHS articulated vaccine distribution planning, implementation, and monitoring strategies that center the needs of Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrant residents, coupling public efforts with those in the non-profit and clinical sector who have deep connections in communities facing the greatest barriers to accessing supports that mitigate risks of COVID-19. In this way, DHHS efforts reflect an understanding of – and seek to address both historical and current – inequities BIPOC communities face in accessing healthcare information and services throughout the County.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-91 – *FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) COVID-19 Emergency Response* – is to deliver emergency services to County residents as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These costs, in the amount of \$15,909,513, were not included in DHHS’s approved FY23 operating budget, with the

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understanding that the County would seek supplemental appropriation authority following the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducting an analysis of expenditures through the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year through the end of the year. The total requested amount reflects both services and expenditures that have already been provided or encumbered this fiscal year, as well as services and expenditures that are anticipated to be needed for the remainder of the fiscal year. Additionally, the County will actively seek reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for all eligible expenditures. DHHS requires additional appropriation to recognize those expenditures due to FEMA reimbursement being in the form of revenue. The following is a breakdown of the amounts included in the supplemental request:

- Minority Health \$1,108,000;
- Vaccination, \$286,573;
- PCR testing, \$5,174,694;
- Rapid testing, \$2,250,000;
- IT for testing and vaccination, \$219,876;
- Outbreak nurses, \$875,040;
- Nurses for OMS, \$421,200;
- COVID Motel and expenses, \$2,366,350; and
- Other Motel and expenses, \$3,207,780.

ORESJ has previously documented in numerous REIAs national and local racial disparities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the areas of healthcare, employment, education, and housing. These REIAs also provide analysis of leading policies and practices from policy experts and other jurisdictions for addressing and preventing disparate outcomes in the future. Given this funding request builds upon many of the efforts previously examined by ORESJ, the Office directs those considering this appropriation to do so by reviewing the following:

- Supplemental Appropriation #21-528 Covid-19 FEMA Emergency Protective Measures Grant: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/21-528.pdf>
- Supplemental Appropriation #21-529 Covid-19 Mass Vaccination CARES Grant: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/21-529.pdf>
- Special Appropriation #21-533 Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/21-533.pdf>
- Special Appropriation #22-56 Health and Human Services Covid 19 <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-56.pdf>

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DHHS's efforts along with the County's Framework for Equitable Access to the COVID-19 Vaccination<sup>1</sup> continue to align with national best practices as it relates to serving those at greatest risk of harm as a result of the pandemic and the health inequities it exposed. Specifically, the County continues to engage in efforts such as prioritizing proximity and physical accessibility of vaccination sites in disadvantaged communities and for people with disabilities as well as providing transport to and from vaccine sites for populations facing the greatest risk.<sup>2</sup> This is especially important as it relates to efforts to increase booster uptake as national data suggests that fully vaccinated White people are more likely to have received a booster shot compared to other racial/ethnic groups<sup>3</sup>. This is also true for County residents as White people across all age groups are more likely to have received a booster.<sup>4</sup>

cc: Dr. James Bridgers, Acting Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Government. *Framework for Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccination*. 2021. Available at: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/Resources/Files/vaccine/mc-vaccine-equity-framework.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Kaiser Permanente. *Covid-19 Vaccine Equity Toolkit*. 2021. Available at: <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/content/dam/kp/mykp/documents/instructions/covid-19-vaccine-equitytoolkit-external.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Halder, S, & Artiga, S. *Overview of Data on Race/Ethnicity of COVID-19 Booster Shot Recipients*. 2021. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/overview-of-dataon-race-ethnicity-of-covid-19-booster-shot-recipients/>

<sup>4</sup> DHHS Pulse Report. *COVID-19 Impact and Recovery April 5, 2023: Additional Dose Rates by Race and Age*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/Resources/Files/pulse/DHHS-Pulse-230405.pdf>